

# FORM A - AREA

Assessor's Sheets   USGS Quad   Area Letter   Form Numbers in Area

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

415-02458-371	South bridge	STU. L	STU.74, 126;STU.210 -216; STU.914
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## Photograph



**Southwest Lodge**

**Town/City:**     Sturbridge

**Place** (*neighborhood or village*): Sturbridge Center

**Name of Area:**     (Wight/Motel Area) Old Sturbridge Inn &  
Reeder Family Lodge, Levi Lincoln House and commercial block

**Present Use:** Motel Complex and Stores

**Construction Dates or Period:** 1787-1789, 1836, 1963  
and 1970

**Overall Condition:** Good

### Major Intrusions and Alterations:

Motel placed on property of historic home; historic home  
moved and converted to store.

**Acreage:**             12.33 acres

**Recorded by:**     Bonnie Parsons, PVPC

**Organization:**     Sturbridge Historical Commission

**Date** (*month/year*): November/2017

## Locus Map

Please see continuation sheet.

☒ see continuation sheet

**INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET**  
**MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

STURBRIDGE OLIVER WIGHT HOUSE  
& REEDER FAMILY LODGE, LINCOLN  
HOUSE AND FRIENDLY'S RESTAURANT

Area Letter	Form Nos.
STU.L	STU.74, 126; STU.210-216; STU.914

- ☐ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.  
*If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.*

*Use as much space as necessary to complete the following entries, allowing text to flow onto additional continuation sheets.*

**ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION**

*Describe architectural, structural and landscape features and evaluate in terms of other areas within the community.*

The Old Sturbridge Inn is made up of the 1789 Oliver Wight House, the 1963 Reeder Family House that is now the Inn's office, and five, multiple-unit motel lodges also dating from 1963.

The **Oliver Wight House** (STU.74, "a" on map) is a two-and-a-half story, high-style, late Georgian house with an unusual gable-on-hip roof. The west-facing, clapboard-sided building rests on granite foundations and has a wood shingled roof. The main block with its center chimney is five bays wide and five bays deep and there is a later-added, two-and-a-half story ell on the east elevation. While the building was constructed during the period that the attenuated and sometimes delicate Federal style (1776-1820) was prominent, the high relief of the Wight House's robust decorative features better reflect the Georgian style (1750-1776). The façade has a center entry with a classically-based, trabeated surround composed of pilasters rising from moulded bases to support an architrave below a deep pediment ornamented with modillion blocks. At their capital level, the pilasters enclose a six-light transom. The entry has a nine-panel door. At first floor level, windows have 12/12 sash and crown lintels that project from the façade. Windows at the second floor level are placed close to the roof eaves, which are ornamented with a row of dentils below a row of modillion blocks. Sash at the second floor level is also 12/12. Two, narrow, shed-roofed dormers with 6/6 sash project from the west side of the hipped section of the roof. The south elevation of the Wight House was designed by Wight as another version of classical architecture. Here the center entry is again trabeated and is composed of pilasters on moulded bases but here the pilasters support an architrave and widely projecting cornice ornamented with a row of dentils. Reflecting its secondary entry status, the transom has only five lights. First and second floor windows are identical to those on the façade and are repeated on the north elevation. A wide skirt board encircles the house uniting all elevations.

An open lawn serving the motel complex as a "**green**" (STU.914) lies south of the Wight House. Four Colonial Revival style lodges and the Colonial Revival style Reeder House, now office, encircle the green. The **Northeast Lodge** ("b" on map) is a one-and-a-half story, vinyl-sided building that has an H-plan. The three sections of the vinyl-sided lodge have gambrel roofs. The center section is three bays wide with a centered entry flanked by two large, fixed, 48-light windows. 6/6 vinyl sash windows open on the ends of the projecting wings of the lodge. Two large brick chimneys rise from the junctions of the wings and the main block of the lodge. A Colonial Revival style door surround made up of pilasters supporting an architrave ornaments the entry.

The **East Lodge** (STU.211, "c" on the map) is also composed of three sections in a Palladian-like arrangement. The center section is a one-and-a-half story building under a steeply-pitched, side-gable roof. At each side of it are front-gabled pavilions connected to the main block by triple-arched loggias. The main block is five bays wide and its center entry is beneath a large, projecting pediment. Centered above the pediment on the roof is a louvered cupola. The building is vinyl-sided, has vinyl windows, asphalt roof and concrete foundations.

There are two lodges on the south side of the green. The more easterly of the two (STU.212, "d" on the map), the **Southeast Lodge** is a duplicate of the Northeast Lodge. The **Southwest Lodge** (STU.213, "e" on the map) uses the same elements as the East Lodge but arranged in a different order. The largest of the lodges surrounding the green, it is C-shaped in plan and one-and-a-half stories. It has a four-bay center section under a side-gable roof. Across its façade is a four-arch loggia. Wings of four bays each under hipped roofs are attached on east and west of the main section. At

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Area Letter	Form Nos
STU.L	STU.74, 126; STU.210-216; STU.914

the junction of the roofs of the main block and the wings project two, front-gabled pavilions a single bay wide. Centered on the roof of this lodge is a two-stage, octagonal cupola topped by a weathervane.

Closing the west side of the green is the **Reeder House** (STU.214, "g" on the map), now the motel office. It is a north-facing Cape of one-and-a-half stories with a long ell on its south elevation. The vinyl-sided building has a center chimney and is five bays wide and two bays deep. The ell is five bays long and one of its bays is a recessed entrance. In the angle between the main block of the house and the ell on its east elevation is a shed roofed porch on posts.

Southwest of the Reeder House is the largest of the motel lodges the **Mixed Use Lodge** (STU.215, "f" on the map). It is one-and-a-half stories and has a long rectangular plan in which ten, front-gabled and hipped roof sections are connected by side-gabled sections recessed behind two-arched loggias. This lodge contains commercial uses as well as meeting rooms and amenities for the motel guests. It is vinyl-sided, has concrete foundations and an asphalt shingled roof as do all the lodges.

Part of the same property at 269 Main Street are two buildings, the Governor **Levi Lincoln House** of 1836 (STU.216) and the former Friendly's Restaurant, now **Antique Center** of 1973, (STU.126). The Levi Lincoln House is a two-story, Greek Revival style building by the early American architect Elias Carter. The north-facing building has a hipped roof with two interior chimneys. It is five bays wide and four bays deep with an added two-story ell that is six bays long on the north followed by a second, one-story ell of one bay length. The recessed façade of the building is flushboard behind a row of colossal, fluted, Doric columns *in antis*. The center entry is grand in scale as are all the building's proportions. It is trabeated with fluted pilasters below Greek key cornerblocks and a projecting cornice. Enclosed within the surround are full-length sidelights and a three-light transom. Carter further ornamented the elements of the surround with intersecting fillets creating a "plaid" pattern that was to become popular in Greek Revival style, gable field window muntins. First floor windows of the façade are full-length with 6/9 sash. Their surrounds are fluted architrave with cornerblocks. Second story façade windows and the remaining windows of the east and west elevations have fluted architrave surrounds with cornerblocks and 6/6 sash. The other elevations of the house are clapboard-sided and all four corners have broad, panelled pilasters.

The **Antique Center** building of 1973 is a Colonial Revival style restaurant whose design was one of several developed by the Friendly's Restaurant chain. It is one-and-a-half stories in height under a side-gable roof. A cupola is mounted on the roof. The clapboard-sided, north-facing building is three bays wide and two deep. It has a wing on the west of one-story. The north façade of the main block is three bays wide with an enclosed portico flanked by two large multiple-light windows at each side.

## HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

*Explain historical development of the area. Discuss how this relates to the historical development of the community.*

The **Oliver and Harmony Wight house** was designed and perhaps constructed by the cabinet-maker Wight (1765-1837) between 1787 and 1789. According to Holly Izard of Old Sturbridge Village, the builder was Samuel Stetson; traditionally, Wight himself is the attributed builder. Wight was born in Medfield, Massachusetts in 1765 and with his parents David and Catherine came to Sturbridge in 1766 as an infant. In 1786 he married Harmony Child and the marriage seems to have precipitated construction of their farmstead. The first building constructed was in 1788 when Oliver built a large barn on this land, which he received from his parents. The next year, he began a workshop and this fine house. Rufus Porter itinerant painter was hired to paint murals in the house, suggesting the level of its interior decoration. Wight farmed as well as worked his craft but it appears that he was unable to meet his financial obligations and in 1793 left the house and moved with his family. They came back to Sturbridge a year and a half later and Oliver continued his work as a cabinet-maker until 1806 when again his debts grew too large to meet. Ultimately, in 1815 his father David took over the property and sold to Ebenezer Howard from New Braintree, also a cabinet maker, but who used the house as a hotel. Oliver returned to Sturbridge in 1830 and died there in 1837.

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STU.L	STU.74, 126; STU.210-216; STU.914

Between 1815 and 1863 the house changed hands several times until in 1863 George Wight bought it back into the family. George Wight was a saw and grist miller, though he and his wife Caroline also farmed the property. It remained in the Wight family until 1936-1937 when Albert B. Wells bought it for Old Sturbridge Village. The Wight house was part of the Old Sturbridge Village campus until 1963 when it was converted to the Liberty Cap Motel run by the Reeder family with four motel buildings added to the property and the Wight House open to guests in its added ell. The Reeder family lived in what is now the office. In the mid-1970s the Reeder family retired and Old Sturbridge Village took over the motel's management calling the motel complex "**Old Sturbridge Inn**" with 39 rooms. The Reeder family were trustees of Old Sturbridge Village and when the outdoor museum was in need of re-ordering its finances in 2005, the inn was closed. It re-opened in 2013. During that period, Sturbridge's Town Hall was being rehabilitated and the motel spaces were used as a temporary town hall.

The **Governor Levi Lincoln House** ("h" on map) was built in Worcester, the second house designed by Elias Carter for Lincoln in 1836. It was moved to Sturbridge in 1952 when it was given to Old Sturbridge Village. Carter (1781-1864) began his career in Brimfield in 1805 joined his father Timothy and uncle Benjamin, Worcester building contractors, in 1830. In partnership with Zenas Studley and Marchant Tobey, Elias Carter became involved from a housewright to architect by 1829 and began working periodically in the South with buildings attributed to him in Savannah, and Macon, Georgia from 1832, 1842 and 1847. In between trips Carter worked in Worcester where his developed Greek Revival style influenced other active architects. In Sturbridge in 1952 Old Sturbridge Village took advantage of the burgeoning tourist trade on Main Street and used the building first as a restaurant and since then has had a series of tourist-attracting shops as tenants.

The **Antique Center** ("i" on map) was added to the Old Sturbridge Village property on Main Street in 1973 as a Friendly's Restaurant, once the Lincoln House was no longer acting as a restaurant, again as an income-producing business for Old Sturbridge Village. A modern Friendly's Restaurant (367 Main Street) is next door to this property, on land which the Friendly's corporation purchased from Old Sturbridge Village a few years prior.<sup>1</sup>

## BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

### Maps

Bailey, O. H. & Co. Bird's eye view *Sturbridge and Fiskdale*, Massachusetts, 1892.  
Beers, F. W. *Plan of Towns of Sturbridge and Southbridge*, 1870.  
Walling, H. F. *Map of Worcester County*, Wm. E. Baker, Boston, 1857.

### Primary Sources

Chase, Nelly M. *Photograph Album*, Joshua Hyde Public Library, Sturbridge.

### Secondary Sources

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Burns, Brian. *Sturbridge: A Pictorial History*, Norfolk, 1988.  
Clark, Joseph. *Historical Sketch of Sturbridge, Massachusetts*, Brookfield, Massachusetts, 1838.  
Corey, Charles F. "Old Houses in Sturbridge" *Quinebaug Historical Society Leaflets*, vol.1, no. 5, 1900.  
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Hurd, D. Hamilton. *History of Worcester County, Massachusetts*, vol. 1, Philadelphia 1889.  
Izard, Holly. *Old Houses of Sturbridge*, scrapbook, n.d., Joshua Hyde Public Library, Sturbridge.

<sup>1</sup> Per Barbara Search, Sturbridge Historical Commission Chair, 2017

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Area Letter	Form Nos.
STU.L	STU.74, 126; STU.210-216; STU.914

Massachusetts Historical Commission. *Reconnaissance Survey Report*, "Sturbridge", typescript, 1984  
Search, Barbara. Chair, Sturbridge Historical Commission. Additional Information Provided, 2017.

### Digital Resources

[www.Ancestry.com](http://www.Ancestry.com) for federal censuses 1790-1940 and Massachusetts State Censuses 1855, 1865.

<https://dp.la/> Digital Public Library of America

[www.masslandrecords.com](http://www.masslandrecords.com) for deeds

[www.loc.gov](http://www.loc.gov) HABS drawings of Wight House.

### List of Properties in Area

415-02458-371	STU.74	369-371 Main Street	Oliver & Harmony Wight Hs.	1787-89	Georgian	B
415-02458-371	STU.914	369-371 Main Street	green	1963	Landscape	S
415-02458-371	STU.210	369-371 Main Street	Northeast Lodge	1963	Colonial Revival	B
415-02458-371	STU.211	369-371 Main Street	East Lodge	1963	Colonial Revival	B
415-02458-371	STU.212	369-371 Main Street	Southeast Lodge	1963	Colonial Revival	B
415-02458-371	STU.213	369-371 Main Street	Southwest Lodge	1963	Colonial Revival	B
415-02458-371	STU.214	369-371 Main Street	Reeder House	1963	Colonial Revival	B
415-02458-371	STU.215	369-371 Main Street	Mixed-use Lodge	1963	Colonial Revival	B
415-02458-371	STU.216	369-371 Main Street	Gov. Levi Lincoln House	1836	Greek Revival	B
415-02458-371	STU.126	369-371 Main Street	Friendly's Restaurant	1973	Colonial Revival	B



Oliver & Harmony Wight House

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STU.L	STU.74, 126; STU.210-216; STU.914



Reeder Family House



Gov. Levi Lincoln House

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STU.L	STU.74, 126; STU.210-216; STU.914



Friendly's Restaurant/Antique Center

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Area Letter      Form Nos.

STU.L	STU.74, 126; STU.210-216; STU.914
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